

THE
ORACLE
OF
GOD.

A Sermon appointed for the Crosse,
and preached in the Cathedrall Church of St.
Paul, in London, on the 20. day of December,
being the Sunday before Christmasse,
Anno Dom. 1635.

By *Iohn Gore* Rector of *Wenden-lofts* in *Essex*



L O N D O N,

Printed for *J. P.* and are to be sold by *Andrew Creeke* and
Charles Greene. 1646.

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THE
ORACLE
OF
**Perlegi hanc concionem, cui titulus
(Gods Oracle) in qua nihil reperio
sanae fidei, aut bonis moribus contra-
rium.**

**Theo. Wecker, R.P. Episc.
Lond. Cap. Domest.**

By John Gore Rector of Wickenham in Essex



L O N D O N
Printed for J. P. and are to be sold by Andrew Knapton and
Charles Guttery. 1646.



TO
THE RIGHT HONORABLE
CHRISTOPHER CLETHROW, Lord
Maio^r of the honourable City of London;
whose dignity and prosperity, God
long continue.



*That it pleased your Honour
to desire, may it please you al-
so to accept (a poore mans
Sermon.) I have no other
plea, nor other hopes nor
meanes to find grace in your
eyes (seeing I am a stranger,) but only for that
Grace's sake, which is the theme and subject, the
pith and marrow of my text. In a word there-
fore, As Iacob prayed heartily for his sons, when
they went to present themselves before Ioseph,*

A 2

Gen.

The Epithet Delectatory:

Gen. 43. 14. God Almighty give you
mercy in the sight of the man: Such is
my hearty prayer to Almighty God; God Al-
mighty give mee mercy in your sight, and you in
his sight, Oratum est,

Your Honours

poore servant and suppliant,

JOHN GORE.



THE
O R A C L E
O F
G O D.

2 C O R. 12. 9.

My Grace is sufficient for thee.



T is well knowne that this *Sunday*, and some of the rest that are gone before, are commonly called in our Liturgy by the name of *Advent-sundayes*, as you would say in plaine English *Comming Sundayes*. And wot you why? because therein we doe thankfully celebrate and solemnize the blessed time and memory, of our Saviours comming to us in the flesh, and his arrivall from heaven in this vale of misery. If any man desire a
B reason

reason why we celebrate the comming of our Saviour in so solemne, so sacred, and so settled a manner, being gone and past 1600. yeares agoe? Saint *Iohn* hath given me an answer to my hand, *Because grace and truth came by Iesus Christ, Ioh. 1. 17.* When Iesus Christ came from the bosome of his Father, he came not empty-handed, nor unprovided: but brought *Truth* and *Grace* into the world with him: *Truth* to direct us to heaven, and *Grace* to deliver us from hell: and that's a Congiary that deserves commemoration to the worlds end. If any man shall yet further inquire, what is this *Grace* to us? or what are wee the better for the *Grace* that hee brought? For that my text will resolve you, and make it evidently appeare unto you, that Christ is no niggard of his *Grace*, neither doth he keepe it to himselfe (as *Nabal* did his viſuals) but doth graciously impart it, and mercifully bestow it, so much upon every one, as he seeth in his wisdom to bee enough and sufficient for him. *My Grace is sufficient for thee.* And let that suffice for the occasion and choyce of my text, that it is not *παραπλῆξον*, not altogether unsutable and impertinent to the time.

Come we now to the Text it selfe, which is nothing else but *The Oracle of God*, or Gods owne immediate voyce, not disdainig to utter it selfe from Heaven, for the comfort and satisfaction of his poore distressed Suppliant here on earth. Fur thus stood the case.

Our Apostle at this time was punished with two strange and strong afflictions, the one internall, the other externall; the one he termeth the *Thorne* in the

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the flesh, the other the *Messenger* of Satan that buffeted him. By that same *σκόλοψ ἐν σαρκί*, *Thorne* or splinter in the flesh. I suppose hee did meane his owne concupiscence, his owne corruption and lust, which is as painfull and vexatious to a tender soule, as a thorne in the hand, or a splinter under the nayle, is irkesome and grievous to the tender flesh. By that *Ἀγγελος σατάν*, the messenger, or the angell of Satan, must needs bee understood the Devils temptation; for before that wicked one come himselfe, hee sends his Messenger or his Angell before him to make way for his entertainment, and as *Elisha* said of the King of *Israels* man which was sent to behead him, *2 Reg. 6. 32. Is not the sound of his Masters feet behinde him?* so beleeeve it, whensoever an evill temptation, or a temptation to evill doth come before, the devill himselfe who is the master and maker of it is not farre behinde. Now marke how this evill angell used, or rather abused *S. Paul*; the Text saith, He fell foule upon him, and buffeted him: now you know that buffeting is a malicious act joyned with violence, or a violent act joyned with malice, and it signifies unto us, what a malicious minde the Devill beares to Gods especiall servants; if he cannot by faire meanes entice, and allure, and inveagle them to sinne; if God will give him leave, he will fall upon them by foule meanes, even *καταφίζειν* to buffet them, and enforce them in a manner to sin against God and their owne soules. Thus forely was our poore Apostle haunted, thus cruelly was he handled, both with venemous corruptions within, and with violent temptations

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without, so that neither inwardly, nor outwardly : hee could bee free or at liberty to enjoy himselfe and his God : Whereupon (saith the Text) *He besought the Lord thrice, that they might depart from him* ; all his desire, all his prayer to God was, to be rid of these annoyances. Now marke the answer, and observe the *Oracle* of Almighty God.

Iust as some skilfull Phyfitian, when his Patient in a feaver calls for drinke, gives him a sirrope, or some conserve, and so quencheth his thirst in a better kinde, than drinke could doe : so dealt the Lord with *Paul*, who was now in a spirituall feaver, and cryes out amaine, (as it were for drinke) that is, for some present refreshing, and release of his punishment. God seemes to take no notice of that, but quencheth his soules thirst in a better kinde, gives him a spirituall conserve, endues him with his *Grace*, and let that content thee (saith God) let that suffice thee ; for that, even that alone is entirely enough and sufficient for thee.

My Grace is sufficient for thee.

From which passage of Gods providence (before I come to particulars) give me leave to commend unto you this brieve observation in generall : *viz.* That if after all our prayers, after all our entreaties and importunities with God for private and particular favours and mercies ; as for health in time of sicknesse, for ease in time of paine, for rest and deliverance in the time of trouble and affliction : Though God should seeme to take no notice of us, but deny or withhold all these things from us ; if he doe but condescend unto us in this one thing (as he

he did to Saint Paul) if he doe but vouchsafe us his *Grace*, *Summam votorum attingimus*, wee have as much as heart can wish, wee have that which is in stead, or in lieu of all the rest. As the Jewes write of their *Mannab*, that it had in it *Omne delectamentum*, all manner of delightfull tastes, and was in stead of bread, in stead of meate, in stead of all kindes of dainty fare; so may it truly bee affirmed of the *Grace* of God, that it is in stead of health, in stead of wealth, in stead of all other earthly blessings whatsoever: so that as a man that walkes in the Sunne, never looks nor regards whether the Moone or the Starres shine or no, because he hath no need of their light: so hee that enjoyeth the light of Gods countenance, that hath the *Grace* of God to befriend and bestead him, needs care the lesse for these inferiour commodities, these *Bona seabelli* (as the Fathers call them) these goods of Gods Foot-stoole; because, if he have them not, God will so provide he shall have no need of them. In a word then, if thou wert put to thy choise, as *Salomon* once was, to aske any one thing at the hands of God, and to have promise of acceptance, what should that one thing be? wouldst thou aske for riches, or pleasure, or long life, &c? Alas, all these things thou mayst have, (as many a man hath had) and be never the holier, never the happier, never the higher in Gods account and favour: Leave therefore all these things to Gods disposall and dispensation; let God doe with thee for these things what seemeth good in his owne eyes: but pitch thou thy heart, and the desire of thy soule

upon that *Unicum necessarium*, that one thing necessary (which our Saviour speakes of) in comparison whereof all other things in the world are needlesse and superfluous, I meane upon the *Grace of God*, and nothing else; and in thy daily prayers to Almighty God, let this evermore be the maine of thy requests. *Whatsoever thou deniest me for other things, Lord, grant me thy Grace, and it is sufficient.*

My Grace is sufficient for thee.

Out of which words I shall endeavour to shew you foure remarkable points, perhaps not unworthy your observation. 1. The meaning of the word *χαις*, or what is meant by the *Grace* here spoken of. 2. The Author or the owner of this *Grace*, whose it is, and to whom it doth of right belong, and that is to God, as the next word impliyes, *χαις μου*, *My Grace*. 3. The efficacie or vertue of this *Grace*, what it profiteth, and whereunto it availeth, and thats exprest in the word *ἀρκει*, it is sufficient; and therein I shall shew you, how, and wherein the sufficiency of Gods *Grace* doth consist. 4. The Application of this *Grace*, or the bringing of it home to the conscience and soule of each beleev-
ing Christian, and that I gather out of the last word, *σοι*, that God doth not say in generall *ἀρκει παντι*, *My Grace is sufficient for all*; nor in speciall *ἀρκει πολλοις*, *My Grace is sufficient for many*; but in particular, *ἀρκει σοι*, *My Grace is sufficient for thee*, and so for me, and so for every one upon whom God in mercy is pleased to bestow it, *ἀρκει σοι ἡ χάρις μου*, *My Grace (saith God) is sufficient for thee.*

Of

Of these in their order as briefly and effectually, as God and his good Spirit hath enabled me; and first of the meaning of the word *gratia*, or what is meant by the grace here spoken of.

By the grace of God (in few words) I conceive to be meant nothing else but the favour and good will of God; that which the Schoolemen terme *Complacentiam Dei*, the well-pleasednesse of God: the same which the Scripture calleth *Lucem faciem*, the light of Gods countenance, *Psal. 67. 1.* Because as God is said to frowne and bend his browes upon the wicked traine, *Psal. 34.* so on the contrary, hee seemes to smile (as it were) and to looke amiably and lovingly, and lightsomely upon all them that are in grace and favour with him. It is an usuall expression among us to say, such a one is in great grace with the King, or in great grace at the Court, we meane, he is in great favour there. And it is a phrase no lesse usuall in Scripture, *Gen. 6. 8.* *Noah found grace in the sight of God, i. e.* hee found favour in his sight; and God Almighty saith of *Moses* *Exod. 33. 12.* *Invenisti gratiam coram me, Thou hast found grace in my sight, i. e.* favour and good acceptance: And so the Angel greets the blessed Virgin, *Luke 1. 28.* *Feare not Mary, Invenisti gratiam, Thou hast found grace, i. e.* thou art highly favoured of the Lord. So that the grace of God, and the favour of God are (as *Ioseph* said of *Pharaohs* dreames) both one and the same. Now the thing that I muse upon is this, that the grace and favour of God is thus often, if not alwayes exprest in the Bible, *sub termino inveniendi*, under the name and terme of finding

finding : It is not barely said of *Noah*, and *Moses*, and the Virgin *Mary*, *fuērunt*, they were in grace and favour with God, but *invenērunt*, they found it: this phrase doth certainly seeme to imply (as *O-leaster* well observes) that the grace and favour of God is sometimes found, as a poore man findes a treasure, or a bag of gold, *non industriā, sed casu* ; not by any industry or paines-taking for it, but meerely by casualty and Gods providence in it. As when *Iosephs* brethren found their money in their sackes mouthes, it enriched them, and it ravished them too, with wonder and admiration, *Gen. 42. 28.* in like manner, when a poore disconsolate wretch, shall without all desert, and beyond all expectation, finde a sensible experiment of Gods favourable goodnesse towards him ; how can hee chuse, but even blesse himselfe, and say, Lord, what am I that such a favour should be cast upon me ! In a word, as *Iacob* answered his aged father when hee questioned him about the matter of his venison, *Gen. 27. 20.* *How is it that thou hast found it so quickly my sonne?* (saith he) *Because the Lord thy God brought it to my hand.* In like sort, if any shall seeme to question the matter, how it comes to passe that some one man findeth favour and riseth to preferment so easily and so quickly over that some others doe, which to our thinking deserves it better, *In promptu ratio*, the Lord their God brings it to their hand: when God brings a blessing to hand, the labour is not long to finde it. But that by the way.

I shall here take occasion to resolve you of two questions,

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questions, which doe offer themselves to your consideration; the first is this, when a man wants the grace and favour of God, how shall he doe to finde it? the second is like unto it, when a man hath found Gods grace and favour at his need, how shall hee doe to keepe it, that hee doe not forfeit it, nor loose it againe? I will answer you for both, in a word.

Dost thou want the Grace of God, and faine wouldest finde it? Thou must doe two things for it.

First, thou must *depreciari teipsum* (it is *Tertullians* word) thou must disparage and disgrace, thou must humble and abase thy selfe before the face of God: for if that bee true which our Saviour saith, *loh. 10. 35. non potest solui scriptura*, The Scripture cannot bee broken: then no man living can finde Grace with God, but he that is truly humble (for God resisteth the proud and giveth grace to the humble) Let one example serve for all, and it is a seasonable one for this time: that of the blessed Virgin, of whom wee spake before: The Angel told her (as you have heard) that shee was *εξαιρετικη*, highly or extraordinarily in favour with God, for indeed shee had such grace, as never mortall woman had the like with God, to bee made *θεοτοκος*, the Mother of God, and to beare him in her body, who in his body bare away the finnes of all the world; to give her owne Saviour sucke; it was a favour beyond expression: well, but whence came this to passe that the Virgin Mary found this favour with God rather then any other Virgin in

Israel: no doubt (as our Saviour said in another case) many widdowes were in *Israel* in the dayes of *Elizeus*, but to none was the Prophet sent, save onely to the widow of *Sareptab*: So, many Virgins were in *Israel* in the dayes of the Virgin *Mary*, yet to none was the Angel sent, but to her onely: And why to her, and not to them? shee that knew it best, gives the reason her selfe in her *Magnificat* which we daily read; *My soule doth magnifie the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoyced in God my Saviour*; for why? *Respexit humilitatem* (saith shee) *Hee hath regarded the lowlinesse of his hand-maiden*. It was not then for her lovelinesse, but it was for her lowlinesse; not for her handshomenesse, but for her humblenesse, that she found such grace and favour with God above her fellow Virgins: Other Virgins there might bee that were as chaste as shee, as beautifull as shee, and farre more wealthy and gay then she was; but no Virgin in *Israel*, nor in all the world, was so humble nor so lowly as she was; and this was the onely *materia struenda misericordiae*, (if I may so speake) the matter that Gods mercy had to worke upon; that, that onely, was the foundation and ground-worke of all the grace and favour that she found with God. In like manner, if thou dost desire to bee partaker of the same mercy, to finde favour with God as shee did, thou must also be partaker of the same humility, thou must bee humble and lowly as shee was: doe as *Benhadads* servants did to *Ahab*, *1 Reg. 20.31*. *We have heard (say they) that the Kings of Israel are mercifull kings, let us goe then and put sackcloth upon our loynes, and ropes*

ropes upon our heads, and so humble our selves before him, peradventure wee shall finde favour with him, that we shall not die but live: So thou hast heard that the God of Israel is a mercifull God, stand not then upon termes of ease or state if thou lovest thy selfe, but goe and humble thy selfe unto him, prostrate thy selfe before him, pray and seeke his face in the lowliest, the dejectedst, the devotest manner that possibly thou canst expresse both with thy body and with thy soule, and (believe it for a truth) if any thing under heaven bring thee into favour with the God of Heaven, that will doe it, *depreciare se-ipsam*, to disparage thy self.

Secondly, thou must *Appropriare Christum*, thou must appropriate Christ unto thy selfe, thou must shrowd thy selfe under thy Saviours wings, thou must sue to God under his protection and patronage, and as the *Herodians*, *Act. 12.* made friendship with *Blasus* the Kings Chamberlaine to helpe them into favour with *Herod*; so must thou make friendship with Jesus Christ, for it is hee and onely he that can helpe thee into grace and favour with thy God. *Gratificavit nos in dilecto* (saith the Apostle, *Ephes. 1. 6.*) Hee hath brought into grace, or hee hath made us accepted in his beloved Sonne. *Gratiam pro Gratia* (saith Saint *Iohn* elsewhere, *Ioh. 1. 16.*) *Wee have received Grace for Grace*; that is, for the Grace and favour that Christ hath with God, wee also are received into grace and favour with him: For otherwise, as *Elisha* told the King of Israel, *2 Reg. 3. 14.* *As the Lord liveth were it not that I regard the presence of Iehosaphat, I would*

not looke toward thee, nor see thee: So stands our case with God, wee are of our selves such vile bodies (as the Apostle rightly termes us, who shall change our vile bodies) I meane so foule and so full of corruption and lust and sinne, so odious and abominable in the holy eyes of God: that as the Lord liveth, were it not that God doth regard the person, the presence and the prayers of Jesus Christ our true Jehosaphat, he would not looke to us nor see us: but that (as he saith himselfe,) *This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* (There come we into favour) and marke, that he doth not say, This is my beloved Sonne which pleaseth mee well, but in whom I am well pleased; which intimates a further matter unto us; namely, that our blessed Saviour doth not onely please God his Father, for his owne part, but that God in him, and for his sake is well pleased even with them that are in themselves (as the Prophet speaks) even vessels wherein there is no pleasure, *Ier. 22. 28.* Thou therefore that desirest to get into favour with thy God, flatter not thy selfe in thy owne eyes, thinke not that God will accept thee for thy owne person, or for any other personall qualities or abilities that are in thee; but as *Jacob* shrouded himselfe under the garments of his elder brother, and by that meanes got him the blessing of his Father; so doe thou shroud thy selfe under the garments of thy elder brother in Heaven; I meane, as the Apostle speaks, *Labour to be found of God, not having on thy own righteasnesse, but the righteousness of Christ by faith.* Say as *Tertullian* doth, *Mihi vendo.*

vendico Christum, mihi defendo Iesum; claime thou thy part, stand thou for thy right in Jesus Christ; and as thou art a Protestant, so make this protestation before God and the world, that thou hopest for grace and mercy, not by any merits or deserts of thy owne, but meere by the merits, and by the spirit, by the death, and by the Blood of *Iesus Christ*. This is another infallible way for a man to finde the Grace and Favour of God, that wanteth it, *appropriare Christum*, to get an interest into Gods beloved Sonne, our deare and precious Saviour.

2. Now for the second question; Hast thou found the favour of God, and faine wouldst keepe it? Thou must *ορθοπεδεῖν*, (it is the Apostles owne word, *Gal. 2. 14.*) Thou must walke with a right foot to God-ward; or as *Iohn Baptist* expresseth it in other termes, thou must *Rectas facere semitas tuas*, *Make thy paths straight*; the meaning is, Thou must binde thy selfe to the good behaviour unto God, thou must resolve against sinne and evill, and set thy selfe constantly, carefully, sincerely to walke with God, so farre forth as frailty shall permit thee, so that though there fall out many intercurrent infirmities in the course of thy life, for a man may, *etiam in bono itinere pulverem colligere*, gather dust and soyle even in a good way, yet let it be the generall drift and desire of thy soule, in nothing, willingly to sinne against God, but in every thing to please him, and to approve thy selfe unto him: which if thou dost, see what will follow upon it, *Psal. 84. 11. The Lord will give Grace and Glory,*

and no good thing will bee with-hold from them that walke aprightly with him. The Scripture saith of *Enoch*, that hee was *Raptus a facie malitie*, snatched (as it were) out of this wicked world, as a brand is snatched out of the fire and saved from burning; that is, Hee was translated alive from earth into Heaven, and never felt, nor tasted of death: This (you will say) was an extraordinary favour of God, but what might bee the reason of it? *Moses* tells us, *Gen. 5. 24.* it was becaule *Hee walked with God*; the Apostle commenting upon it, *Heb. 11. 5.* saith, it was becaule *He pleased God*, *εὐαρεστήσατο*, (is the word) which signifies, Hee gave God content, or kept Gods favour and good will; so then, the way to keepe Gods favour and good will, is to please God, and give him content; and the way to doe that, is *to walke with God as Enoch did.* But what doth *Moses* meane by *walking with God*, how may that be done? *Answ.* Generally, A man may then be said to walke with God, when he leads his life in such a way as God doth best accept, in the way of Godlinesse and Honesty, in the way of temperance and sobriety, in the way of diligence and industry; when a man hath a minde on God in all his wayes, and desires Gods protection and conduct to guide his feete into the way of peace. This is, in a generall sense and acceptance to walke with God more particularly; A man is then said in proper sense to walke with God, when hee walkes with none else but God; as *Isaack* did when hee sequestred himselfe, and went out alone into the fields to meditate and to pray, *Gen. 40. 69.* (The word

word (*Suach*) signifieth both, then went he out to walke with God: And indeed there is no such time for a man to converse with God, and (as the phrase is in *Iob*) to acquaint himselfe with the Lord, as when hee is solitary, private, and alone: If any thing grieve a man, or lye heave upon his conscience, when he is *Alone*, he may freely disburden his heart into the bosome of God. If a man have faulted any way, or done amisse for want of good take-heed, when he is *Alone*, hee may freely and fully bewaile and bemoane, and even beshrew and thrive himselfe unto the Lord his God. If a man want any good thing thats requisite and necessary either for the body or the soule, when hee is *Alone*, he hath free and full opportunity to beg and to entreat it, to win and to obtaine it at the hand of God. No such time for a man to reconcile himselfe, and to make his owne attonement and his peace with God, as when hee is *Alone*. In a word then, if thou dost desire to keepe the favour of the Lord, and to abide in his grace and his good will; doe as *Isaack* did; take one turne with thy God every day thou risest: steale away from thy earthly occasions (as our Saviour stole away from his earthly Parents) to doe the businesse of thy heavenly Father, or as the Apostles word, *2 Pet. 3. 9.* *χαρῆσαι ἐν μετανοίᾳ*, to retire and repent. Let no day passe thee without some commerce and conference with thy God; and (believe it) if there bee any meanes in the world to fasten and rivet the favour of God unto thy soule, that will doe it, *ἐξομολογῶν* to walke aright with God.

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01 I have done with the first generall part of my Text concerning the meaning of the word *χαρις*, or what is meant by the Grace here spoken of: Come we now to the second, and that is the Author and Owner of this Grace, exprest in the next word (*μὴ*) God claimes it as his owne peculiar) and calls it by a terme of propriety, *My Grace*, to shew that none hath to doe with the dispensing of that but himselfe alone.

Now if you marke the course of Scripture, you shall observe that there is not any thing which belongs to man, but in one place or other God claimes it for his owne. Though he hath given the earth to the Children of men, yet hath hee not alienated it from himselfe, but that still, *The Earth is the Lords, and the fulnesse thereof*: whatsoever fulnesse the earth affords us, whether it be Fields full of Corne, Folds full of Sheepe, Orchards full of Fruit, Tables full of Meate, &c. all these fulnesses are the Lords, *who openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousnesse*. And not onely the earth in generall and the fulnesse thereof, but the very Cattell and Beasts of the earth, are all the Lords too: *Psal. 50. 10. All the Beasts of the Forrest are mine* (saith God) *and so are the Cattell upon a thousand Hills*. The Beasts of the Forrest (we know) are *fera natura*, of a wilde unruly nature, they know no Master, acknowledge no owner, are in subjection to no keeper; yet because the Lord takes care of them, gives them their being, and provides them their food, therefore doth he justly claime them for his owne, and saith, (*All the Beasts of the Forrest are mine*)

wine) and so are all the Cattell upon a thousand hills; whether they be sheepe or goates; Neate or Fowle; there's no man living hath any right unto them upon earth, but he holds it in *capite*, and hath his right from the God of Heaven.

Not only so; but the very Corne in our Barnes, the Wine in our Cellars, the Wooll upon our Sheepes backs, the Lord claimes for his owne, as yee may see, *Nes. 2. 8, 9.* For God bestowes his blessings, as the Sunne doth his beames, in such a manner, as that they depend still upon himselfe after he hath bestowed them. Nay to come neerer yet, the very money that is in our purses or coffers, whether we keepe it close to hatch a purchase; or put it out, as the Lion puts out his claw to rend and gripe the poore needy borrower; wheresoever God findes it, hee claimes it for his owne, *Hag. 2. 8.* *The Silver and the Gold is mine;* and as little conscience as men make of their gaines, they must one day be accountable to the Lord, How they got it, how they used it, and how they wasted it. All this is to let us understand to whom wee are beholden for our Lands, for our goods, and for whatsoever else we inherit or injoy in this world, even to the Father of lights, (as *James* termeth him, *Iam. 1. 17.*) from whom both *donis*, and *signum*, both gifts and goods, and all descend unto us; therefore as in the sacrifices of old, whosoever had the flesh, God had the fat, so whosoever hath the goods of this world, let God have the glory, for his they are, and from him we have and hold them.

But there is one thing in my Text, for which we

are more beholding to God, then for all the rest; and that is for *His Grace*, other things though they come originally from God, yet they come mediately by the meanes of other instruments, by Parents or Friends, or Benefactors; but Grace is a thing that comes solely, and onely, and immediately from God; as there was no corne to be had in *Egypt*, but from the hand of *Ioseph*, so no grace to bee had on earth, but from the hand of God: *Hee is the God of all Grace* (as *Saint Peter* truly stileth him) there is no grace whatsoever that is wanting in man, but there is a gracious supply to be had in God, which made *David* (as it were) in a rapture to cry out and say, *Oh taste and see how gracious the Lord is*, *Psal.* 34. 8. First taste, and then see; because as a man can never truly tell the sweetnesse of Honey, till hee have tasted it first; so can hee never truly see nor perceive, nor understand how gracious a God the God of Heaven is, till he have first had a taste of Gods Grace, and an experience of Gods favour in himselfe and for his own soule. *Tast then and see how gracious the Lord is*: Gracious in his Throne, for it is *the Throne of Grace*, *Heb.* 4. 16. gracious in his spirit, for it is *the spirit of Grace*, *Zach.* 12. 10. Gracious in his Word, for it is *the Word of Grace*, *Act.* 20. 30. and above all, gracious in himselfe, for *Hee is the God of Grace*: yea, *θεος παντος χαριτος*, *The God of all Grace*, *1 Pet.* 5. 10. And therefore dost thou desire wisdom? Hee is the God of that Grace; dost thou want patience? hee is the God of that too; dost thou stand in need of Faith, or Hope, or Charity? he is the God of all these: Oh what a gracious

cious God doe we serve, and what gracelesse beasts we are if wee serve him not, seeing hee hath grace sufficient for all his servants? *My Grace* (saith God) *is sufficient for thee.*

In a word then, forasmuch as all Grace is of God, that He, and none but He, hath the disposall and the dispensation of it to whom hee pleaseth; take (I beseech you) into your consideration these brieve advertisements following.

1. *Ne deficias*, doe not faile of it; It is the Apostles owne caveat, *Heb. 12. 15. Looke diligently least any man faile of the Grace of God.* God for his part is so gracious, that he denyes his grace to none, but offers it, and (I may say) gives it to every one that will but aske and accept it, as the Scripture saith of *Araunah*, *2 Sam. 24. 23.* when hee offered King *David* his Oxen for a sacrifice, and his threshing instruments for wood to burne them; the Text saith, *All these things did Araunah as a King give unto the King*: whereas we know, he did not give them, because *David* would not accept of them, but his will was to have given them, and that the Holy Ghost accounts as a gift, and so recordeth it. In like sort, God offers his grace in the Word and Sacraments, his will is graciously and freely to bestow it, if sinfull men were but like-minded to receive it, and to make themselves capable of so great a mercy by desiring it. It was Gods owne proposition to his owne Sonne, *Psal. 2. 8. postula a me, &c.* desire of mee, and I will give thee the heathen for thy inheritance, &c. If hee that was sole Heyre of Heaven and Earth (*heres ex toto asse*, as the *Romans*

used to stile them) could no otherwise come by his inheritance but by way of petition to desire it afore he had it, much more so is it with us; where no desire is, looke for no gift, no prayer, no grace. Wee see in *Esay*, God makes a gracious promise to his people, that he would put away all their sinnes, and take them all into his favor, as though they had never sinned; but marke the condition, *for all these things I will be sought unto* (saith God.) So though God offer his Grace to men, hee will not force it upon them against their wills, hee will have them sue for it, hee will have them desire it, or they may chanke themselves if they goe to hell without it; and God may justly complaine of them, as *David* did of *Naball*, *1 Sam. 25. 21.* *All is in vaine that I have done for these men.* Seeing then there is no backwardnesse in God to make deniall of his grace, but he is willing to bestow it upon all that are desirous to imbrace it; Oh be not wanting to thy owne mercy, *ne deficias*, doe not faile of it.

2. Seeing that Grace is the Lords, *ne superbiat*, be not proud of it, doe not *μεγαλυνειν*, (as *Saint James* his word is, *chap. 3. 5.*) doe not magnifically lift up thy selfe above thy brethren whose graces are not so eminent as thine: but rather as the eares of *Corne*, and the boughes of trees, the more they are laden with fruit, the lower they hang to the earth: so the more God hath laden thee with his graces and favours, bethou so much the more lowly in thy owne eyes; and thinke not scorne to doe as thy God does, who though his Glory bee above the Heavens, (saith *David*, *Psal. 113. 6.*) yet hee doth

doth abase himselfe to behold the things that are in the earth; and as the more direct the Sonne is over us, the shorter and lesser is the shadow: so the more that Gods grace is over thee, and in thee, the lesser let the shadow of pride bee seene to come from thee: for consider (saith the Apostle) *What hast thou that thou hast not received?* or what is that thou canst properly call thine owne, but *mendacium & peccatum*, lying and sinne: as our Saviour said of the devill, *Iohn 8.* when hee speaketh a lye, hee speaketh *de suo*, of his owne, God never put that into him: so for thy sinnes thou must thank thy selfe, or rather indeed beshrew and blame thy selfe, for they are thy owne; but if thou hast any grace or any vertue in thee, thanke God for that; for it is not thine, it is the Lords: seeing then thou art but a Tributary to God, and hast nothing that good is, but what thou art beholding, and must be countable to the Lord for it, *ne superblas*, bee not proud of it.

3. Seeing Grace is the Lords to bestow on whom he pleaseth, *ne invidias*, doe not envy it, let not thine eye be evill because God is good, nor thinke the worse of another man because God is better to him then unto thee: for Gods grace is his owne, he may give it to whom he will. When God shall take off his grace, and of his good Spirit (as *Samuel* said to *Saul*) shall give it to a Neighbour of thine that is better then thou: what cause hast thou to be envious at this? and not rather to humble thy selfe, and thinke that (as *Daniel* told the King, chap. 5. 27.) God hath weighed thee in a balance, and found thee

thee, *minus habens*, wanting to God and to thy selfe, and therefore hath justly with-holden his favour from thee, and given it to one that will use it better, for his glory, and for the Churches good, farre be it from any child of God to cherish in his breast the spawne of that old serpent the Divell; for envy is no better; (as the learned have well observed) there is so neere a resemblance betwixt an envious man and the Divell, that in the Booke of God the one is taken for the other; so the Divell is called *ἰχθὺς αἰθρῶπος* an envious man (*Mat. 13. 28.*) & an envious man is called *διδόλος* a devill (*Iob. 6. 70.*) How farre better would it become us in this respect to be *ἰσχυροί*, like the Angels of Heaven; who now at Christmas time, when they saw that our Saviour would in no wise take their nature which was farre better then ours; but tooke our nature upon him, which was farre worse then theirs, and which was most of all, and would have gone most against our stomackes, commanded them to worship it, *Heb. 1. 6.* they were so farre from envying, or taking offence at this; (as that elder brother did in the Gospel, when the younger was received to grace after his riotous course) that even then they sung an Anthem for the joy of our happinesse, and even to this day; (Saint Peter tells us, *1 Pet. 1. 12.*) they doe *ἰσχυροί*, stoope downe; (as it were) in duty and love, to honour the mystery of Christs incarnation, and to admire the Grace and favour of God to mankind: In a word then, seeing that the honouring of Gods grace wheresoever it lights, is a quality so Angelicall; and the contrary so diabollicall

licall, let it bee thy practice evermore to reverence him that hath it, to judge thy selfe unworthy of it, seeke it in Gods name, and get to be partaker in it, but in any case *ne invidias*, doe not envy it.

4. Seeing that Grace proceedes from so holy a Fountaine as is the Lord, *ne Abutariis*, doe not abuse it, doe not vitiate nor staine it with sinne, as *Lot* entreated the men of *Sodome*, *Gen. 19. 8.* that they would not abuse the Angels of God, seeing they were come to shelter themselves under the shadow of his rooffe? So let mee entreate you all in the Name of Christ that you would not abuse the graces of God, seeing they are come from Heaven to take shelter and harbour in your breasts and bowels. The Apostle speakes of some (*Iud. 4.*) that turne the grace of God into wantonnesse; and that's a woefull kinde of Alchymie (as one saith singularly well) would he not esteeme that man prodigally foolish and mad, that would spend all his time, all his substance, and all his industry to find out a perverse Philosophers stone, that should turne all the gold it touched into lead and drosse? even such are they that pervert the grace of God, and turne it into wantonnesse, into lasciviousnesse, into all manner of scurrility and deboistnesse, and never lin, till they have made a poyson of an Antidote, and baned themselves with that which would have beene their blisse, *Lucerna Det in spiritu hominis* (saith *Salomon*, *Pro. 20. 27.*) *The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord*; it implyes, that a man naturally walkes in darkenesse, which is full of error, and full of terror, till God in mercy set up a candle in his soule,

(I mean) endues him with knowledge and grace from heaven, that he may shew him the path of life, and to avoid the snares of death.

Now you know, that a candle naturally burnes upwards, if you take it and turne it the wrong way, and hold it downewards, it dyes and goes out alone, so fares it with *graces*, Graces and gifts of God, as Wit and Wisdome, Knowledge and Learning, and all these are the candles of the Lord, and are purposely given us to light us up to heavenward; but if wee take Gods candles and hold them downeward, turne them the wrong way, and apply and abuse them to sinne; it is much to be feared, the light of God will goe out, and thou shalt be left at the length in a place of utter darkenesse. Therefore as thou tenderest the favour and goodwill of God, and the eternall welfare of thy owne soule, deale not with the Graces of God, as *Iehu* dealt with *Iehorams* messenger, 2 Reg. 9. doe not turne them behinde thee, and make them serve against their owne masters; but remember that if the sonnes of *Israhel* would not endure to have their sister abused (*Gen. 24. ult.*) how dost thou thinke thy God will endure to have his grace abused, and to be prostituted to every sinne? In a word, as *Ruben* said to his distressed brethren, (*Gen. 42. 22.*) *did not I speak unto you saying, Sin not against the child and ye would not heare?* Oh bee not you like them, *monitoribus asperi*, so carelesse and regardlesse of divine admonition; but remember that you have beene spoken unto, that you have beene warned of God not to sinne against your owne soules in this

too common kinde, but if the Lord have betruſted you with his grace, labour to cheriſh it; and (as the Apoſtles word is *καταζωπυρεῖν* 2 *Tim.* 1. 6.) to blow it or ſtirre it up, as we do a dying fire, to kinde and quicken it by the uſe of good meanes, but in any caſe, *ne abutaris*, abuſe it not.

5. Laſtly, ſeeing thou haſt to doe with the grace and favour of God, *ne diffides*, doe not diſtruſt it, doe not make any doubt or queſtion of it but it will beſtead thee, and befriend thee, and be firme and ſure unto thee at any time of need. It is the Apoſtles owne advertiſement, 1 *Pet.* 1. 13. *τελῶς ἐλπίζετε*, truſt perfectly on the Grace that is revealed and brought into the world by Jeſus Chriſt. It is a thing that a man may leane his whole weight upon, and venture his whole eſtate upon, and pawne his life and ſoule upon, the certainty, the truth, and the infallibility of Gods heavenly grace to all that make their peace, and put their truſt in him. *Feare not Mary* (ſaid the bleſſed Angel to the bleſſed Virgin) *for thou haſt found favour with God*: as if he had ſaid, Let them feare that are out of Gods favour, let them be diſtruſtfull that are wicked and deceitfull, that make no conſcience of their wayes, but live in the diſpleaſure of an angry God; *paveant illi*, let them feare; but *noli tu*, feare not thou, be thou ſteadfaſt & unmoveable in thy affiance to God, for why? *invenisti gratiam*, thou haſt found favour with him, in whoſe favour is life, and whoſe grace will bee thy guide unto the day of death. In a word then, (to cloſe up this point) As I ſaid before, ſo I ſay it over againe, *τελῶς ἐλπίζετε*, gird up the loynes of your
E mindeſ,

minde, and trust perfectly to the Grace of God; doe it not in any wavering, or timorous, or unconfident manner, as if God were like the Poets *Tenedos*; *Statio malefida carnis*, a trustles Anchor-hold to the sea-beaten Traveller; or like those deceitfull *Iewes*, (*Iob. 2. 24.*) to whom our Saviour durst not commit himselfe, though they seemed to beleeve in his Name. Oh let not thy heart entertain the least suspicion, the least jealousie of the faithfulness and fidelity of thy God; but try him by thy prayers, and trust him by thy faith, and urge him with this Text that now is preached unto thee, (as *St. Austin* saith his mother *Monica* did, *Chyrogapha tua ingerebas tibi*, Lord (saith he) shew urged thee with thy own hand-writing) tell him but how hard the world goes with thee, and then say ere God have done with thee, if thou dost not finde his Grace to bee sufficient for thee. And so I am come in the third place to shew you the efficacie and vertue of the Grace of God, how and wherein the sufficiency thereof doth consist; *signu*, (saith the Text) *My Grace is sufficient*.

The principall things whereunto the Grace of God (and besides Gods Grace, nothing else under heaven) is available or sufficient, are these that follow.

I. *Ad Condenandum*, to pardon and forgive us all our finnes, which would bee the bane and destruction of all our soules. *Grande est barathrum peccatorum meorum* (saith a Father) *sed major est Abyssus misericordiae Dei*: Great is the gulfe and whirlpools of my finnes, but greater and deeper

is the bottomlesse Sea of Gods Grace and mercy : see that place, *Rom. 5. 20. where sinne abounded, Grace did much more abound* : Hast thou abundance of sinnes, let not that dishearten thee, God hath abundance of Grace ; if thy sinnes be great, his Grace is greater then thy sinnes, and farre more sufficient to justifie, than all thy sinnes are to condemne thy soule. Onely *ne desis*, be not thou wanting to God in thy prayers and repentance, and his Grace shall never bee wanting to thee in thy pardon and forgiveness. What a golden sentence is that of *St. Chrysostome*, *ἐν ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἡμῶν ἀποθνήσκει, ὡς αὐτὸ ἐπιθυμῶν ἀφθαίρει* ; Thou dost not, thou canst not so much desire to have thy sinnes forgiven thee, as God doth desire to forgive thy sinnes unto thee. *I forgave thee all thy debt, because thou desiredst mee*, (said that gracious Lord to his ungracious servant, *Mat. 18. 32.*) intimating unto us, that if God doe not forgive us our debts, if he doe not pardon and remit our sinnes ; we may thanke our selves, the fault is our owne, because we doe not desire him, for if we desired him, he would doe it. In a word then, as our Saviour asked the Cripple, *Iohn. 5. 6. Wilt thou be made whole ?* so, wilt thou bee made holy and cleane, and fit for absolution from God ? dost thou desire in sincerity and truth to have thy sinnes remitted, and thy soule absolved by the blood and death of Jesus Christ ? to have all thy misdeeds expunged and blotted out, that they may be as if they never had beene ? Then take the Prophet *Esaias* counsell (*Esay 43. 25, 26.*) *put God in remembrance of these things* : (it is a pregnant place,

I pray reade and remember it) *I even I am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine owne sake, and will not remember thy finnes :* (there's a gracious promise ; but marke the condition in the next immediate words) *put mee in remembrance* (saith God) and I will doe it, and not otherwise : for though God remember all our finnes, and can tell them better than our owne soules ; yet hee doth not remember them to our comfort, but rather to our confusion, unlesse we tell him and put him in remembrance of them : so that the onely way to put our finnes out of Gods remembrance, is to put them into his remembrance ; the onely way to make God forget them, is daily and houely to declare them and put him in minde of them. If therefore thou canst not be so good as thou wouldst, bee not ashamed, bee not afraid to tell God how evill thou art ; tell him how ungodly, how unthankfull, how unprofitable a servant thou hast beene unto him, and desire God to mend thee, and make thee such a one as he would have thee : And as *Ioseph of Arimathea* went to *Pilate* & begged the body of *Iesus* ; so goe thou to God and begge the Spirit of *Iesus* ; even that *spirit of grace and Supplication* (which the Prophet speakes of, *Zach. 12. 10.*) which will come downe from heaven and bring into thy soule, first Supplications to prepare thee ; secondly, Grace to assure thee of the free and full forgivenesse of all thy finnes : And then let thy finnes bee what they will bee, finnes of death, finnes of blood, finnes of hell ; if thou canst finde in thy heart to pray, God will finde in his heart to pardon, for his *Grace is sufficient*

sufficient to doe it. That's the first.

2. The second thing whereto the sufficiency of Gods Grace doth belong, is *ad consolandum* to comfort those sad and heavy hearts that can no other way bee comforted. I should have fainted (saith David, Psal. 27. 13.) for all my worldly comforts, but that I steadfastly beleaved, to see the Lords good grace in the land of the living, (that is) to see it before he dyed; therefore we reade, 1 Sam. 30. 6. when he was in great distresse, had neither house nor home to shelter him, neither wife, nor child, nor friend to be any comfort to him, but his owne very souldiers began to talke of stoning him; *Then* (saith the Text) *David comforted himselfe in the Lord his God.* Heare this thou poore disconsolate man, that art (as thy Saviour was said to be) *μελνυρας*, *sad round about*; thou that lookest into thy purse, and there is no comfort, money is gone; that lookest into thy cubbord, and there is no comfort, provision is gone; that lookest into thy Barne and Store-house, and there's no comfort, Corne and wares are gone; that lookest in thy heart, and there's no comfort, cheerfulness and joy is gone: Then looke up to God, and there is comfort to bee had; if there bee any water, it is in the Sea; if there bee any light, it is in the Sun; if there be any comfort, it is in God. Therefore the Apostle justly calleth him, *The God of all consolation*, 2 Cor. 1. because when all other comforts faile, there's comfort to bee found in God. For beleewe this for a truth, there is no mans case, no mans estate, no mans soule is desperate to God; but when they are at the lowest ebbe, at the

poorest stay, at the most forlorne hope; then doth God speak peace unto their souls; then doth he draw out those same *ubera consolationes*, those breasts or dugges of consolation (which the Prophet speaks of, *Esay 66. 11.*) and drops downe that same *אֶבְרֵי חָלָא* that sincere milke of heavenly comfort, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to give life to them that are of a contrite heart. The *Hebrews* observe that one and the same word (*nakam*) signifieth, first to repent, and then to comfort; and it may bee well applied to this purpose: that true comfort belongs to none but such as are truly penitent: so our Savior tels us that the holy Ghost whom he calls the Comforter when he commeth, the first thing he will doe, is to convince the world of sinne; that is, first put men quite out of comfort in themselves, then put them into comfort by their Saviour. In a word then, forasmuch as comfort cannot be had without repentance, nor repentance be endured without comfort, nor either of these be attained without God; it remaines, that as the daughter of *Zebedee* besought her earthly father (*Mat. 23.*) so wee beseech our heavenly Father, to give us the Springs above, as well as the Springs beneath; I meane, that *Irriguum superius*, the spring of grace & comfort from above, as well as that *Irriguum inferius*, the spring of sorrow and repentance from beneath: and then let our discomforts and discontentes be what they will, wee shall have grace sufficient from God to countervayle them all, and as *Phillip* said to our Saviour, *Ioh. 14. 8.* Lord shew us the father and it sufficeth us; so though our finnes confound

us, and our consciences condemne us, *Lord shew us thy favour, and tis sufficient for us.*

3. The third is *Id sanandam*, His Grace is sufficient to cure and heale us of all those *σωματικὰ παθήματα* those bodily ailments and infirmities which God for sinne doth inflict upon us, *ἀπο νόσου & μαστιγῶν* from those scourges and rodde (as the Holy Ghost termeth *sovere diseases*, Luk. 7. 21.) for indeed they are the very rods which God useth to chasten and correct us for our follies: I say, there is no rod so sharpe, no disease so sore, but Gods grace is sufficient to heale it and to take it off. *I am Ropca* (saith God, *Exod. 15. penult.*) *I am thy Physitian*, or *I am the Lord that healeth thee*: and if God be the Physitian, his Grace is the Physicke, for whosoever be the instrument of our health, God is the Authour, his Grace is it that doth the cure. Therefore in common speech, when any outward malady doth befall us, whereof we know no second cause; wee use to say (and we say well) that it *came by the Grace of God*: now if thou beleevest that it came by Gods Grace, beleeye this also that by the same Grace it shall (in Gods good time) bee remedied, and removed and done away, for (as St. James saith in another case) God giveth *πλεονα λαειν*, *Cap. 4. 6.* *He giveth more grace, and sheweth more favour*, to heale those that are sick and broken in heart, than to breake their hearts, with sicknesse that were well and whole; both are from the same Grace, but the one more especially then the other.

But then the maine point for satisfaction will be this: seeing it is in the power of Gods Grace to cure

cure all infirmities, and that in a moment, with a word-speaking, (as the Centurion said, *Speak but the word, and my servants shall be whole.*) Why will God suffer so many of his owne Patients, that have no Physitian but himselfe, to lye languishing so long under his owne hand, and seeme to take no notice of their miseries? The best answer I can give, is that of our Saviour to his Mother, *John 2.4. Nondum venit hora, My houre is not yet come;* for you must conceive there are two kindes of houres; wee have our houre, and God hath his Houre. As soone as wee begin to sicken, that wee feeble but any paine, or finde the want of any ease; then is our houre to be healed, then doe wee cry out, as tis fit we should, *Have mercy upon mee, O Lord, for I am weake, Lord heale me for my bones are vexed, Psal. 6. 2.* But God hath another houre, and that you shall finde, *2 Chron. 7.14. When my people humble themselves, and pray and seeke my face, and turne from their wicked wayes,* (that is, when they are bettered and amended by my afflictions) *Then (saith God) will I heare in heaven, and have mercy upon them, and heale their Land.* God complains of that people in many places, that their hearts were waxen fat, that they would not see with their eyes, nor heare with their eares, nor understand with their hearts, *Ne convertantur ut sanem, Mat. 13. 15.* lest they should be converted, and I should heale them. So that the time of our conversion is Gods healing-time; First, labour to be converted, and then looke to be healed, and not before. So *Acts 3. 19. Repem and be converted, that your sinnes may be blotted out,*
and

and then (and never till then) looke for a *Tempus refrigerii*, a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We read, *Numb. 12. 14* When *Myriam* was stricken with leprosie, *Moses* was importunate with God to heale presently out of hand; *Heale her now, O Lord, I beseech thee, Heale her now.* No (saith God) I will not heale her yet, shee shall stay the time that I have determined upon her, for if her Father had but spit in her face, should she not have beene ashamed and kept in for seven dayes, &c. So perswade your selves of this, that there is a ~~certaine~~ appointed time that God hath set downe with himselfe in heaven, when and wherein his mercy shall appeare on earth for our recovery; and till that time we must wait, (as *David* saith, *Psal. 123. 2.*) *As the eyes of a servant wait on the hand of their masters, and the eyes of a mayden on the hand of her mistresse, so doe our eyes waite upon the Lord our God, untill that he have mercy upon us.* Marke that same *donec miseratur*, untill hee have mercy: that is, though God shew thee not mercy, this day, nor to morrow, nor the next day, may bee, not till a long time after; yet, let not thy heart be dismayed, but let thy soule truely wait upon God, untill hee shew thee mercy, let him shew it when he will. In the meane time know, thou art under the hands of a wise and gracious God, who measures every dram of sorrow that thou feelest, who will not only be about thy bed, but will ever make all thy bed in thy sicknesse, and will so establish and under-prop thee with his Grace; that though thy body lye in paine, thy soule shall lye at ease; though thy out-

ward man consume and melt away for very heaviness, yet that same *Interior cordis homo*, (as Saint Peter speakes) the inner man of thy heart shall bee so strengthened with might, and armed with patience, and guarded with peace, that neither paines of death, nor the powers of Hell shall ever be able to prevaile against thee. In a word, if ever it shall please God to cast thee downe upon that same, *Letum languoris*, that bed of languishing, which David speakes of, *Psal. 41. 4.* (for that wee all must make account of) though we now lie and laze upon our beds, the time may come that wee shall lye and languish on our beds; wishing (as they did in *Deuteronomy*,) when 'tis morning, would God it were evening, and when 'tis evening, would God it were morning. If ever such a dolefull time should happen to thee, I pray God of his mercy looke graciously upon thee, and say unto thy bleeding soule, as he did once to that forlorne Infant, *Ezech. 16. 6. Dixi in sanguinibus, &c.* when thou wast in thy blood, I said unto thee, live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, *live*; if God doe but say, thou shalt *live*; though thou wert in thy blood, though thou wert in thy grave, his Word shall fetch thee, for his Grace (if it stand with his glory) is sufficient to heale thee.

4. The last and chiefeſt thing whereunto the Grace of God, and nothing else but Gods Grace, is sufficient, is *Ad salvandum*, to save the soule of every one that hath it. The Apostle calls it, *The Grace that bringeth salvation*, (*in paucis n. omnes*, *Tit. 2. 11.*) for as the wickednesse of man bringeth destruction

struction, so the Grace of God bringeth salvation to every soule that entertaines it. Saint *Paul* is direct, *Ephes. 2. 5. By Grace yee are saved*; whether it bee meant of the Grace of God within us, which our Saviour compares to Salt, *Mark. 9. 50. (Habete salem in vobis, &c. have Salt in your selves, and peace with one another)* because as Salt preserves the flesh, so doth Grace preserve the spirit from corruption and rottenness in sinne: or whether it bee meant of the Grace of God that is over and above us, I meane, his favour and loving kindness which lightneth upon us from Heaven; (as we pray in our Liturgie, let thy mercy lighten upon us, as our trust is in thee,) Take it either way, it holds good and true; for by the one we are prepared for salvation, by the other salvation is prepared for us; the Grace of God within us prepares us for salvation; the Grace of God over us prepares salvation for us: so both wayes 'tis our happiness, *By Grace to bee saved*. It was Gods mercifull promise, *Deut. 11. 12. Mine eyes shall bee upon this Land from the beginning of the yeare, to the end thereof*; Such is Gods goodness where hee bestowes his Grace, such a care hath God of their soules, that his eye is upon them from the beginning of their conversion, to the end of their salvation: and as his eye is upon them to watch over them, so his hand is with them to conduct them in the right way of pleasing God, and of saving their own soules, *Deut. 33. 3. All his Saints are in thy hand*: as a Father leads his childe, so doth God lead his Saints by his Grace, and by his good Spirit, from

all things prejudiciall, to all things profitable, to his service and their owne salvation. (To conclude this point) because (as the Schoolemen say well) *Ad singulos actus desideratur Gratia*, a man hath neede of Grace to every action that hee takes in hand, and that he can doe nothing well without it; let us all desire of God (as it is in the Collect) *That his speciall Grace may evermore prevent and follow us*, first, that God would prevent us with his Grace, to put into our hearts good motions, good thoughts, and good desires; and secondly, that it may follow us too, (as the water of the Rocke followed the Campe of the Israelites to the Land of Promise, 1 Cor. 10. 4.) so that Gods Grace may follow, accompany, and goe along with us in this world; and never leave us, never forsake us till it hath brought us to the end of our Faith, which is the salvation of our soules, according to that, *Psal. 109. ult. Dominus ad dextram, &c.* the Lord is at the right hand of the poore, to save him from all them that would condemne his soule, where note that hee doth not say, the Lord is at their left hand (which is as I may terme it) the lazy hand, to save men in their negligent and idle courses; But he is at their right hand (which is the working hand) to save all them that work for their salvation, and carefully use the meanes to save themselves: which thing if thou make a conscience to doe, though thy sinnes and thy enemies should conspire to condemne thee, Thy God and his Grace will be sufficient to save thee.

And so at length, I am come aboard the last and long-

long desired part of my Text, which contains the application of all in particular, which hath beene spoken and delivered in generall; drawne out of the word (ool) *My grace is sufficient for thee*, so that, as it is said of our Saviour, *Mat. 21. 45.* that his Doctrine was so punctuall, and clapt so close to the consciences of his Auditors, that the Pharises knew he meant them: So by that time I have done with my Text, (neither will I bee long in doing it) I trust you shall perceive that Gods meaning was to you, when he spake to Saint *Paul*, and told him that *His Grace is sufficient for him.*

Briefly then, see what *Paul* was, and say what thou art; if your case be the same, your comfort is the same; for God is no acceptor of persons, his Grace is as sufficient for the one, as for the other.

1. Saint *Paul* was *Homo in Christo*, he was a man in Christ, as you may see by the second verse of this chapter (*I knew a man in Christ, that was taken up into the third Heaven:*) Art thou such a one? I meane, art thou regenerate and become a new creature? (for he that is in Christ is a new creature. *2 Cor. 5. 17.*) dost thou daily renew thy repentance, and renew thy obedience; and renew thy duty and devotion to God? And is it a grieve to thy soule, that so much of the old leaven, thy old corruption remaines still in thy heart? Then take this holy Scripture to thy comfort, and assure thy selfe, though thy conscience disquiet thee; Gods Grace will be sufficient for thee: contrarily, if thou beest an old weather-beaten sinner, an old rusty drunkard, swearer, and that standest at a stay, and gatherest

sinne, like an old tree that stands and gathers mosse; I must say unto thee (as *Peter* said to *Simon Magus*, *Act. 8.*) thou hast neither part nor portion in this priviledge; thou art not a man in Christ, and consequently canst claime no interest in the Grace and favour of God.

2. *Saint Paul* was *Homo in Cruce*, a man upon the crosse, *Gal. 2. 20.* *I am crucified with Christ*; and elsewhere, *Colos. 2. 24.* I fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ in my flesh: whereupon (saith a Father) *quid deest passioni Christi, nisi ut nos similia patiamur*, what is, or what can be wanting to the sufferings of Christ, but that as he tooke up his Crosse, so wee take up ours and follow him: for *Va portantibus crucem, & non sequentibus Christum*, woe to them that are crucified, and not with Christ; that beare the Crosse, and follow not Christ, but turne from him cleane another way. It is well knowne that afflictions goe under the name of crosses, now a Crosse was a piece of wood for a malefactor to dye on, there was no other use of a crosse but that: Affliction therefore is called a crosse, because it should have the nature and power of a Crosse, that is, it should be a meanes to crucifie and mortifie all carnall lusts and affections in us; that the more we are afflicted, the more wee should dye to sinne, and the lesse life and power should our corruptions have in us. Thus it was with *Saint Paul*, is it so with thee? dost thou wish and desire the death of thy sinnes? dost thou make this use of thy afflictions, even to die daily? (as the Apostles speakes) dost thou every day drive one naile into the body

of

of sinne, I meane one sigh or groane to God against it: dost thou labour to draw blood of thy soule (as they drew blood of thy Saviour) I meane, the teares of true repentance: and is it a death to thy heart, that thou canst not dye unto sinne, and live unto God, as thou shouldest and oughtest to doe? Then looke no further for Heartsease, but to the words of my Text, and assure thy selfe, what ever Crosses be upon thee, Gods Grace (in Gods good time) shall bee sufficient to ease thee. Contrary-wise, if thou beest one that dost *αἰνῶν*, (as Saint Stephen speaketh, *Act. 7. 51.*) one that dost fall crosse and contrary to all but to thy sinnes, and art indeede a very crosse to God himselve and to his good Spirit, by thy perverse ungodly courses, I must say unto thee, as the Prophet *Esay* saith, *Esay 3. 6. Woe bee unto thy soule, for thou hast rewarded euill unto thy selfe: thou forsakest thy owne mercy, and deprivest thy selfe of the comfort of Gods Grace in the time of need.*

3. Saint Paul was *Homo in negotiis*, a laborious man, a man full of imployments, *1 Cor. 15. 10. I laboured more then all my fellow-Apostles* (saith hee) yet not I, but the Grace of God which was with mee. (there's an honest acknowledgement by whom hee profited.) And elsewhere he tells the *Corinthians*, *2 Cor. 11. 9. When I was with you and wanted, nor obtruded, I was not chargeable nor burthensome to any man.* The Learned observe, that word hath his weight from *Torpedo*, which signifieth a Cramp-fish; a Fish (they say) that hath such a benumbing quality, that the cold of it will strike from the
 hooke

hook to the line, from the line to the goad, from the goad to the arme, from the arme to the body of the fisher, and so benum him, & take away al use and feeling of his limbes: His meaning is, that he was none of those idle drones, that by their lazinesse and lewdnesse doe even chill, and benumme, and dead the charity of well-disposed people; but as he laboured in preaching, so hee wrought in his calling too; and put himselfe to any paines, rather then bee chargeable or burthensome to any friend or stranger: and by this meanes it came to passe, that what he wanted at home, he found it abroad; and Gods grace that was with him did ever supply him with that which was enough and sufficient for him. Is it so with thee? Thou that art a poore man, art thou also an industrious and a painfull man? that as *Iacob* got the blessing in the garment of *Esau*, which signifieth, *Working*; so dost thou work and take paines to get the blessing of thy God? dost thou labour with thy hands the thing that is good, that thou mayest rather bee charitable, then chargeable to him that needeth? and will not thy honest labour maintaine thee, nor suffice the charge that daily lyes upon thee? Take comfort by this Text that now is taught thee, and let not thy wants nor thy necessities dismay thee, for there is a God above that hath sufficient for thee; contrarily, if thou beest one that live in pleasure (as Saint *Paul* saith of that widdow, *ζῶσα τε θνήσκει, she was dead even while she lived*) one that spendest thy time in this world, no otherwise then that *Leviathan* doth in the Sea, onely by taking thy pastime therein, or
like

like those Lyllies that our Saviour speakes, that neither labour nor spin, but onely make a faire shew as long as it will hold: Then as *Iehu* said to *Iorams*, *What Peace?* so may I say to thee, *What Grace?* or what favour canst thou looke for at the hands of God?

4. Saint *Paul* was *Homo in arumis*; a man full of cares. I doe not meane of carnall or wordly cares, or such as *Martha's* were, for the things of this life; for these he had cast upon God, and had learned in whatsoever estate he was, therewith to be content; but I meane of spirituall, divine, religious cares, for the health and welfare of the soule, such as he commends in the *Corinthians*, 2 *Cor.* 7. 11. as being the first fruits of Grace and godly sorrow (*πονηρ πένθος*, *What carefulnesse it hath wrought in you*) how much it wrought in them, I know not; but sure I am, it wrought in him a marvellous and a manifold care, and that of the better kinde: first, an immediate care for himselfe, and his own soule, lest after hee had preached unto others, himselfe should be a cast-away, 1 *Cor.* 9. 27. secondly, a charitable and that a Catholicke and universall care for all Churches and Christian soules under the cope of heaven. 2 *Cor.* 11. 28. *Non aliter in ecclesiis quantumvis remotas affectus, quam si illas humeris gestaret* (as *Beza* said of *Calvin*) hee was no lesse tenderly affected for those Churches that were remote and faire off than if hee had borne them upon his owne shoulders, and carried them (as Nurses do their Babes) in his owne bosome. But his third and most especiall care was for the soules and saving health of his li-

the children (as he calls them, Gal. 4. 20.) Of whom he travelled in birth till Christ was formed in them. His care was greater for them, than either for himselfe, or any others; and he gives his reason *ἵτι ἀπορῶμαι ὑμῖν*, for (saith he) *I stand in doubt of you*. Good Parents the more they love their children, the more they stand in doubt of them, least they should fall to any defection, or decline to any corruption, or come to any disaster when they themselves are dead and gone. This made Saint Paul in such perplexity for them; and yet were they but his spirituall children; what care then (may we thinke) would he have taken for them, if they had beene his naturall children too? then might he justly have used that word, and said *ἀπορῶμαι*, *I am in doubt of you*: for *ἀπορῶ* in Greeke signifieth both *dubius* and *pauper*, doubtfull and poore; for none have so much reason to bee doubtfull of their childrens welfare as they that are poorest and have least to leave them. They may justly feare (as the woman of Tekoah said to David, 2 Sam. 14. 7.) lest their coales should be quenched: (for so shee calls her child her coale; for as coales either warme or burne, as they are used, so doe children either comfort or crosse their parents as they prove) now when a poore man shall dye and leave his coales, I meane his Orphans behinde him: such is the world, that where you shall light of one good body that will bee a meanes to cherish and maintaine and keepe them alive, there be twenty to that one so unchristianly and uncharitably minded, that they care not how they use them, yea though they quench and crush,

The Oracle of God.

crush, and put them cleane out. And hence come those *ἀνέμους*, those perplexities and doubtfull cares of tender-hearted Parents for their Children. Hast thou therefore many little ones, and little to leave them? and doth thy heart even yearne with care and feare to fore-thinke what shall betide them, when thou by death art taken from them? I will give thee the same counsell that I desire of God to take my selfe, and that's this, *Cognovisti Gratiam Dei*, (saith our Apostle, *Colos. 1. 6.*) Thou knowest the Grace of God: thou knowest that to bee a sure stay when all other props and stayes are done away: That Anchor will hold when all other tackling breakes: Make tryall of that.

Doe by thy Children as Saint Paul did by his brethren, *Acts 20. 32. Commend them to God, and to the word of his Grace*; Lay them downe at the feet of Jesus Christ, as they in the Primitive Church, laid downe their money at the feet of the Apostles; desire God to bee their Father, Christ to be their Guardian, the Holy Ghost to bee their Guide; and when thou hast done so, then as David saith, *Psal. 116. 7. Revertere ad requiem*, Returne unto thy rest, O my soule, then settle and assure and resolve thy selfe, that Heaven shall want mercy, and earth meanes, before any of those that are under Gods protection and patronage shall want maintenance. Never bee in doubt what shall become of them, knowing that *His Grace is sufficient for them*.

I might adde hereunto many particulars; as that Saint Paul was *homo in vinculis*, a man in bonds, but

the *Grace* of God unloosed them all: that he was *Homo in necessitatibus*, a man in wants, but the *Grace* of God supplied them all: that he was *Homo in periculis*, a man in many perills and dangers, but by the *Grace* of God he escaped them all: that he was *Homo in tentationibus*, a man mightily troubled with temptations, but by the *Grace* of God he overcame them all: All these I purposely overslip (which perhaps might comply with many a mans condition, and conduce to his comfort) but there is one behind that is of greater value than all the rest, that *S. Paul* was, as I pray God of his mercy make me and thee, and every Christian soule to be.

5. *Homo in Caelestibus*, a man of an heavenly disposition; though his bodily abode was upon earth, yet his *παιδεία*, his soules commerce, and conversation was in heaven, *Phil.* 3. 20. no marvell then, that being so much acquainted with God, as hee was; and so conversant in heaven, which is *Gremium Gratiae*, the lap and bosome of Grace; it, as tis said of Saint *Iohn* that leaning in the bosome of Christ, he thence suckt out his heavenly knowledge; So *St. Paul* being so intimate, and so entire with God who is the God of all Grace (whatever else hee wanted) could not possibly want Grace sufficient for him. In a word then: Is it so with thee though in a farre inferiour degree? Art thou, as every good Christian is, and ought to be *ἕξ πολίτης*, a Citizen of Heaven? Dost thou account that thy home, and this but the place of thy pilgrimage for a time? and as our Saviour set his face to goe to *Ierusalem*, *Luke* 9. 51. Dost thou set thy face to go to Heaven?

heaven? doth thy heart stand Heaven-ward? Art thou bound for that coast? (as *Paul* went bound in the spirit to *Ierusalem*, *Act. 20.*) I meane, dost thou set thy affections upon things above, upon God and his Grace? and not on things below, upon the world and her goods which drowne mens soules in perdition? Art thou one of that same *Generis Aquilini*, of that Eagle kinde, whereof our Saviour speakes, *Mat. 24.* (*where the body is, thither will the Eagles resort*) the body of thy Saviour thou knowest is in Heaven, and doth thy soule resort often thither? dost thou wish (as *Macarius* did) *ἵνα συναντήσω* ἡ ψυχή σου τῇ εὐχῇ, that thy soule might goe up into heaven with thy prayers, and there abide for ever with God? Then, what *Nathan* said to *David* in a case of conviction, I dare apply to thee in a case of comfort: *Thou art the man* whom God delighteth to favour: and therefore as the Patriarchs are said *Heb. 11.* ἀσπάζειν, even to kisse and embrace the promises of Christ: so doe thou even claspe and hugge this promise of Grace to thy selfe; and let neither thy wants, nor thy weaknesse dismay thee, for both in life and death thou shalt finde Gods Grace to bee sufficient for thee, which God of his mercy grant unto us all, &c. *Amen.*

FINIS.